

# The Real Reason for the Irritation of the French

## They Want Germany Punished in Fact Before We Theorize About a League of Nations

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LONDON, Feb. 10.—I have always had a reverence for truth. What is more I owe it to my readers to tell them the truth, for that is the best way of justifying their confidence and serving their interests. To my great regret that truth that I feel bound to set before the readers of The Tribune as to the progress of the peace conference is far from pleasant. It is even distressing. I have sought to subdue my personal feelings, that they might not be the support of possibly false impressions, and in my search for truth have this week taken pains once again to talk with a large number of the delegates to the peace conference from different countries, with French politicians, and finally with plain French citizens having no official position, but known to me as just men, as men of good faith.

### Feeling of Uneasiness General and Growing

As a result of this inquiry I am able to state that at the present moment the feeling of uneasiness is general and growing, and that uneasiness is sharply accentuated among those who are taking a direct part in the deliberations of the peace conference. These last testify to what an inconceivable degree the concrete problems arising out of the war, and calling for a prompt solution if dreadful suffering is to be brought to an end, are set aside while the peace conference gives its time to academic discussions.

That my readers may be sure that I do not exaggerate, let me pass in review the practical results of the decisions already reached by the peace conference, and then set out the essential and undeniable facts which face us and despite which the decisions have been reached. This will allow each one of us to see whether we are going, and why we are headed in that direction.

I wanted to find the real reason which pushed Lloyd George in his desire to compound with the Bolsheviks. After going to the best sources I have come to the conclusion that this real reason must be sought solely in British domestic politics. In England, as in other countries, Entente politicians have committed an immense and unbelievable mistake in allowing the British people to believe that the signing of the armistice was equivalent to the conclusion of a definitive peace after a decisive and assured victory.

### Delay in Demobilization Causes Deep Discontent

A large number of the British soldiers were volunteers who had joined for the duration of the war, and they believed that demobilization should follow immediately the signing of the armistice, for they had been told that this meant the end of the war. Since for practical reasons this immediate demobilization was not possible in the case of many who really believed they had the right to go home, discontent broke out among a considerable number of soldiers of the United Kingdom. There was serious trouble at certain points. It was in the belief that he could prevent this trouble from becoming general, and also on the suggestion of certain English radicals, that Lloyd George made the move which he thought was clever from the standpoint of domestic politics, and which would display his breadth of view in social questions. He consented to treat with the Russian Bolsheviks.

President Wilson, as you know, adopted Lloyd George's proposal and laid it before the conference, consenting that the Bolsheviks should be asked to come, not to Paris, but to Prinkipo.

### How Five Great Powers Agreed on Proposal

The five great powers were unanimous in the decision to talk with the Russian Bolsheviks, a majority of whom are common criminals and the agents of Germany, and this unanimity came about in the following manner:

Japan, for reasons which the future will make clear, is withdrawing her troops from Siberia of her own free will, and is clearly not interested in the question of Bolshevism in European Russia. As Italy is making court to England and Wilson, hoping with their support to retain the Slav territory of Dalmatia, it resulted that the proposal to talk with the Bolsheviks easily secured the adhesion of four out of the five powers. Under these circumstances Clemenceau, who represents the dominant French attitude, and who was personally opposed to the proposal, nevertheless gave his adhesion in order that the opening days of the conference would not be marked by evident discord among the Allies. Thus was secured the unanimity of the five great powers.

As if this were not enough, it is to be added that the small powers—Poland,

Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania—notwithstanding that they are directly and immediately menaced by German and Russian Bolshevism, were not even consulted. This fact is the more flagrant since the representatives of these small powers know better than any other delegation at the conference what Russian Bolshevism is and to what condition it has brought Russia. What is more, Kramarsch, Bratiano and Venizelos, representing respectively Bohemia, Rumania and Greece, are known to be students of Eastern Europe. Kramarsch, notably, is a specialist in all that concerns Russia, for he has travelled much in that country and his wife is Russian.

Thus the peace conference included three men exceptionally well qualified to speak on the question of Bolshevism. Their technical knowledge might have been profitable to all the Allies. And what happened?

Consultation with these men was carefully avoided, even though a capital question was involved, and though they were active members of the conference which seeks to found a society of nations. Their advice was not sought in coming to the decision which means danger for the countries of which they are the chiefs and which are in their charge. On the other hand, the resolve to treat with the Bolsheviks was reached by Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson and Orlando, who never set foot in Russia.

### Bolsheviks Strengthened By Conference Decision

The decision of the conference plunged all who know the Russian Bolsheviks into consternation. It is, alas, certain that new torrents of blood will flow, for it is undeniable that this decision strengthens the Bolsheviks, increases tenfold their ardor and will decide them to extend their operations against adversaries who had begun an organized opposition to the most odious of tyrannies. The delight and enthusiasm of the Bolsheviks are to be judged from a special edition of the "Red Gazette" of Petrograd, which shouts its triumph and announces the complete capitulation of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, those who best know Russia are convinced that if the decision of the conference is seriously followed those faithful Russians who have believed that at last the Entente would understand that it was its duty and interest to save them will be flung in despair into the arms of Germany.

Clearly it is part of the game of the Bolsheviks to accept the President's offer to come to Prinkipo Island and talk, for they hope ultimately to reach Paris, thanks to the aid of certain elements at the conference of Berne, whose convocation was part of the general plan.

Out of all this, moreover, comes delay in the solution of concrete questions. This delay plays into the hands of the Germans, helping them, first and most notably, in crushing the Poles, which is their immediate objective for these reasons. The decision

of the conference to treat with the Bolsheviks has stupefied and plunged into despair an immense majority of Frenchmen but newly emerged from a terrible ordeal. A small minority of French Bolsheviks are exultant. The most ardent among them is a man who during the war was always, as by chance, found favoring the solution most favorable to Germany—the "Defeatist" Deputy, Jean Longuet, a grandson of Karl Marx—and for this reason called "Quart de Boche."

In "Populaire" of January 24 he writes: "The power of that bourgeoisie Democrat, President Wilson, continues to be exerted with admirable tenacity against imperialism unleashed in Paris, Rome and London. It remains for the proletariat world, at its gathering in Berne some days hence, to proclaim, with sovereign force, that it is wholeheartedly with the chief of the American State for a peace which, with respect to the rights of all, shall leave behind it no germ of future wars."

It is very well thus to range oneself against imperialism, against new wars. All the world might well subscribe thereto if those who are well informed had not the certainty that the Berne conference, in bringing together delegates of Pan-German social democracy and of Germanophile defeatists of the Entente, disguised under the name Socialists, is but a part of the great German maneuver looking to the reconstruction of Pan-Germania.

### Berne and Stockholm Conferences Similar

In fact the Berne conference has exactly the same object as the Stockholm conference, and proof that this is so is found

conference is designed to exert an effect conformably with that anticipated from the gathering at Prinkipo. Thus will the Bolshevik movement, directed by Germans, have a far greater freedom of movement in Western Europe than would have been possible without the astonishing decision of the peace conference to treat with the Bolsheviks.

Bolshevik leaders in France have not lost a moment in growing bolder. They are already deploying their forces. For some days past strikes have multiplied themselves in this country, having no serious reason behind them, and this seems to indicate that they are but preparatory measures. There is no Bolshevik spirit in France to-day. The population as a whole remains courageous and admirable as ever. But a few weeks from now, as a result of a too rapid demobilization, 2,000,000 men will find themselves flung suddenly into civil life in all parts of France. Many of these certainly will not find work at once, for it is impossible in the twinkling of an eye to remodel for works of peace the factories and workshops which so long have been devoted to the production of war materials.

Moreover, as a direct or indirect cause of the invasion, the cost of living in France is about double what it is in Germany. In fact it has reached a point where it is unbearable. It is certain then that a large number of the men demobilized will find themselves faced with almost insurmountable difficulties, a state of affairs which is certainly unjust as affecting those to whom so much is owing.

So high is the cost of living that many of these men are going to find it impossible to secure the wherewithal to maintain existence. Under these circumstances it is certain that an atmosphere favorable to a revolutionary movement more or less Bol-

announced that the forcible occupation of territory during the period of the armistice would not necessarily constitute title to such territory. The decision seems harmless, even just. In reality it is bound to have very grave consequences. This declaration of the conference is, in fact, a favorable reply to the more or less imperative protests made by the Germans against the national organization begun by the Poles.

Prussian Poland is territory incontestably Polish, which, by all the declarations and promises of the Entente, must pass into Polish possession, and without which Poland would not be able to exist as an independent state. The declaration of the conference has given joy to the Czecho-Slovaks and not only the Germans of Germany but also the Germans of Austria. The "Fremdenblatt" of Vienna describes it as of great importance, constituting an unequivocal disapproval of the action of the Poles and Jugo-Slavs who are organizing on a national basis.

Thus not long after having recognized the Bolsheviks the peace conference issues a statement which has every appearance of being directed against the Slavs and Latins of Central Europe, that is to say, against the Allies whose assistance helped not a little toward victory and whose organization as independent states is the only way to prevent the reestablishment of Pan-Germania.

The results of the weakness and lack of comprehension displayed by the peace conference in the decision I have just referred to have been immediate, as might have been expected. This weakness was accompanied by the rebirth of German aggressiveness. On the occasion of the ex-Kaiser's birthday we find the "Frankfurt Gazette" coming to his defence and declaring that he should not



The Lion and the Mouse

in the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," now the official organ of the Berlin government. That paper has not been able to resist telling us:

"It is not by chance that the Berne conference comes together at the same time as the conference at Paris. The character and activity of the Berne conference will vary according as Wilson or Clemenceau is in the ascendant at Paris."

Let there be no doubt about it: this Berne

sheikh in character is being created. This will be a direct and deplorable result of the decision of the peace conference to treat with the Russian Bolsheviks. New torrents of innocent blood will certainly flow in the East, and it is much to be feared that the same result may be brought about in the West.

A remarkable fact is to be recorded, whose far-reaching effects have yet to be indicated. The peace conference recently

be brought to punishment. The "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" of Berlin also protests against the bringing of charges against William II.

What is more, his birthday moved the German popular party to thank the ex-Kaiser for all he did in the course of his reign. An address was drawn up wherein occurs the following passage:

"With all our hearts we wish your majesty peace in the evening of your life,

## Too Many French Peasants Starving Now While the Conference Takes Time to Talk of a Future World

and desire to assure you that millions of Germans living, as we do, under a new law and new constitution, revere the monarchical idea and repulse all that might basely turn us from the ideal of imperial Germany and Prussian royalty."

All of this indicates the not too distant probability that William II might be reinstated upon the throne. There are not only words to indicate this; there are very significant acts. While the peace conference was naming a commission of inquiry to visit Poland for the study of questions already perfectly clear and well understood by a hundred experts now in Paris, but still unconsulted, Hindenburg was concentrating eighteen divisions against the Poles, the Bolsheviks were advancing from the East and an enormous effort to increase the strength of the Bolshevik army was reported.

The Germans of Austria, also heartened by the declarations of the peace conference, are now declaring for the unity of Germany and against their projects in Central Europe. The Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bauer, has gone so far as to suggest an alliance between Italy and Germany, saying "for the first time in history there exists the possibility of a lasting friendship between Italy and Germany."

Such an Italo-German alliance could only be directed against the Slavs of Central Europe and France. Even though it is clearly impossible that it could come to pass at once, nevertheless, it deserves to be seriously considered.

At Budapest the declaration of the conference, which has the air of being directed against the Slavs and Latins of Central Europe, has been promptly utilized against them. The Magyars are mobilizing against the Czecho-Slovaks. The importance and concordance of these movements have been made known to me by a letter received from French officers on duty in various parts of Central Europe. They show clearly that a demonstration against the Allies is being everywhere organized.

In Bulgaria, where no such republic as was announced in the American press has ever been established, the situation is by no means satisfactory from the point of view of the Entente. As for the Turks they are once again becoming aggressive. Their newspapers are openly threatening Christians with new massacres.

All of these symptoms make it clear that we are soon to assist at an effort looking toward the reconstruction of Pan-Germania. While this great movement is preparing, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government at Berlin, overflows in praise of the society of nations.

As for the German colonies the vulgar idea that they should be partitioned was simple. It has been decided, provisionally, if you please, that these colonies should pass under the guardianship of certain countries, which shall receive their mandate from the society of nations. This society, while it exists, will exercise the right of control in order to see that the rights of the Hottentots and other native tribes are respected. The intention is excellent, but the guarantee is not secure, as might be thought if one remembers how often guardians have despoiled their wards despite all legal precautions.

Let us admit, however, that this decision in regard to the German colonies is excellent. The "Matin" of January 21 calls it a "Notable Fact." I will not deny this, but I find in the same number of the "Matin" the announcement of another fact still more notable. It is sufficiently described in the headlines, which I copy textually: "Misery in Cambodia. Exhausted Peasants Returning From Exile to Take Up Work Again in Devastated Districts Are Not Even Assured of Their Daily Bread." This is the atrocious situation existing in all those parts of France that suffered invasion.

Doesn't it seem to you that the peace conference would have been inspired in first doing justice to those victims of Germany,

who, at four hours' distance from Paris, are still suffering terribly, than desiring to assure the future happiness of the African negroes? Those in Africa could, at least, have lost nothing by a little delay, while the heroic French victims of the German invasion cannot wait.

It is true that for our consolation we have another significant project. It has been proposed that the society of nations shall assume charge of the expenses of the war. This cannot fail to carry comfort to the Germans, for its adoption would, as a practical result, relieve Germany of the burden of repaying the Allied war expenses, since this will be undertaken by the society of nations. As a matter of fact this new proposition would allow the responsibility of Germany to disappear behind the majestic facade of the society of nations, which is no more and no less than inequity. These various decisions and propositions very justly create in the mind of Herbet, editor of "Le Temps," the fear that the society of nations is to be transformed into a machine for allowing Germany "to grind victory small as in a mortar."

As for Arthur Henderson, however, whose lack of understanding has grown more complete since the beginning of the war, he declares that the Society of Nations is the very base of the negotiations for peace; that it is especially necessary to abolish customs barriers.

### Would Lower Wages Of American Workers

Such abolition would have for its practical result the permitting of German products to be sold freely in the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific, thus by means of competition bringing down the salaries of American workers.

Finally, that aberration may be complete, while the Germans and their allies maintain and organize their military forces, the Allies are going so precipitately about their demobilization that one asks oneself whether five or six months hence, when the conditions of peace are established, there will exist sufficient strength at the required points to secure the realization of these conditions. For without this strength there will be no such realization.

We see on one side the too rapid weakening of Allied forces; on the other the reorganization of the enemy forces. It is this situation which permits the "Frankfurt Gazette" to say:

"It is time for Germany to lift her voice and cry Menace! in the ears of the world." Simple common sense obliges us, unless a radical change is brought about, to forecast the approaching evaporation of the Allied victory and, if things go on as they are now going, the reconstitution in five or six months of Pan-Germany. Let it be observed that I am not in the least pessimistic, for I affirm that the Allies have still all the means for preserving that victory and making it absolute and lasting. It would suffice for the present, as already explained, to send several Allied divisions into Poland by way of Dantzig, for their presence alone would remove the growing peril.

If, on the other hand, the Allies refuse to lift a finger; if they do what is contrary to all reason, I am forced to show you where their aberration will bring them. "You are making prophecy again," I shall be told.

### World League Discussion Helpful to Germany

I assure you it is so easy to do that that there is no merit in it. If we are faced by the extremely difficult situation that has been pointed out, it is because there has been an attempt to build a house beginning with the roof; because it has been decided to talk of and found a league of nations before settling the concrete problems left us by the war. More by token of its results, that had been foreseen, that you may have greater confidence in what I say to-day, let me quote a passage from my article in The Tribune of December 22:

"Finally—and this is much more important—to discuss these immense and ill-defined problems, such as the league of nations and freedom of the seas, before concrete problems are solved, would be to do exactly what the Germans want. The Germans count on the following sequence of events: Discussion of great questions, such as the league of nations and freedom of the seas, will divide the Allies. The time taken for those discussions will be lost for the settlement of concrete problems that Germany fears, especially such as reparation. The Allied armies, ceasing to believe in positive results from the negotiations, will demand demobilization. The question of reparation will be decided only in principle and on paper. No police force capable of compelling the Germans to pay their indemnities will be created. The small part of the damage they have caused and keep a greater part of the loot of all kinds that they have stolen everywhere during the war. Under these conditions the financial situation of the European Allies, and especially France, will carry self-evident consequences, the cost of living in France and England reaching intolerable proportions; and before industries could be reorganized Bolshevism would be easily spread by Boche agents."

### Troops in Poland Could Save Situation

For once events justify. That is why I say to you that if you would save the situation—and American public opinion can do much to attain this result—understand that to prevent the reestablishment of Pan-Germania, with its direct menace to the United States, the point at which action must be taken is Poland. And for that, so far as Americans are concerned, merely the presence in Poland of two American divisions at most, would suffice to cork the bottle that holds the perfume of victory and would bring an end to the process of evaporation.

## Fellow New Yorkers, Judge Yourselves

By a New New Yorker

NOT the least of the good that is to be derived from the revolution that made this country vote "dry" is that it has gone a long way toward teaching us New Yorkers that the United States is not bounded on the west by the Palisades. I include myself, out of politeness; I already knew it. The signature at the top of this article is not evidence that my typewriter stutters, but is an indication that I have not been sojourning in your midst long enough to get my name on the tax lists.

But I didn't start out to talk about prohibition; it only offered itself as an excuse for saying what I want to say. Secretary Lane, of the President's Cabinet, said in a New York address, which was printed in The Tribune, that he would like to take the New Yorker to that unknown land lying beyond Hoboken, and, showing him all its manifold wonders, which the Secretary eloquently enumerated, say to him: "This is America."

The Tribune, I notice, has been giving publicity also to some communications which conveyed somewhat the same idea. For instance, I saw one, from a man in Connecticut it was, who said:

"It is extremely difficult for the New Yorker, in the deep canyons of his busy streets, to visualize this mighty country and to appreciate the fact that the country as a whole could, really and truly, worry along some way, even if there were no New York. Yet there are millions of people who feel just that way about it. They do not want to get along without New York; they are proud of the greatest city and all that. But they know that New York is not the nation. I am not berating New York;

I am only stating a fact. I have been all over this country, time and again, and I know what the people think and say."

So you will see that there are others who feel the truth of the thing that I am going to say, and that is that New York is provincial. I don't claim any originality for the statement; neither do I say it with intent to be disagreeable. For I want to say right here and now that while the adjective that describes my New York citizenship is recently acquired it is there to stick. I like your town, and I am here to stay. Thank you. Kind of you to say it, I'm sure.

### Ignorance That Is Classical

But, having established the entente

cordiale, as it were, which permits members of a family to tell each other the truth and get away with it without a fight, I want to say that the ignorance of New York about the rest of the country is colossal. Just one more reference to prohibition and I'm through with that subject, for it isn't what inspired this letter, really. A good many years ago it was now, New York had a very brilliant District Attorney. No, I didn't mean it that way, honestly I didn't. I understand very well that New York has had many other brilliant District Attorneys since that time. But this particular District Attorney, through his brilliance and through fortuitous circumstance, acquired a very wide prominence, and the town which I called home at that time invited him out to break its bread and then scintillate for the benefit of the banqueters. He did. One of his scintillations, standing there perfectly groomed, confident, a master of the art of after dinner speaking, was

a sarcastic comment on "The Moral Yearnings of Rural Communities."

And even as the polished New Yorker said that a "moral yearning" that was going to make America dry was gathering force. Indeed, it had gained so much momentum in that particular locality that, while the city where the banquet was held was not dry and is not yet, that banquet of several hundred business men was.

That is the last reference to prohibition. As my learned friend, the District Attorney, would have said, it was merely the first count in my indictment, which is that if New York knew more about the country at large it wouldn't have been so stunned when William Jennings Bryan's state shoved the grape juice highball across the goal for a touchdown.

My first hint of the ignorance of New Yorkers as regards things Western came a number of years ago, when, on one of my trips East, I stopped at Niagara Falls for several days. Being seated at the same table a number of times with two moderately unyouthful ladies, we engaged in conversation, and one of them at last ventured to ask me where my home was. I told her. Suffice to say that, going either by Chicago or St. Louis, two nights and a day are required to make the journey. Since Mr. McAdoo has juggled with the time tables I know that my secret is safe, and you can't find me out.

The reaction to my answer was gratifying in the extreme. A look of the most intense amazement spread over the face of my questioner. Turning to her companion she exclaimed:

"Did you hear what Mr. Blank said? He's from—!"

"Really!" was the startled reply. "You don't mean it? He isn't, is he?"

Naturally I was curious to know why my answer had caused such a furor.

"Oh," said the ladies rather vaguely, after they had in a measure regained their equanimity, "you are not exactly the kind of man we would expect to come from there."

However, I understood. The ladies supposed that all the masculine inhabitants of my city wore chaps and sombreros and only left their "shooting irons" at home out of deference to the Sullivan law.

The ladies, it may be mentioned, were New York school teachers. It was only the duty that they owed to the cause to which they had devoted their lives that had persuaded them of the necessity, in order to be able to describe this natural wonder to their pupils, to undertake a journey so far from New York as Niagara Falls, a journey beside which the voyage of Columbus was but a stroll down to the corner drug store for an ice cream soda.

### The Stay-at-Home Editors

It was after I became one of the 5,872,043 persons who, the Bureau of Vital Statistics says, live in New York that it was my good fortune to sit at dinner one night with all the members of the staff of a very well known magazine, a magazine that makes more than a pretence of being national in its scope. And it developed in the course of the conversation that ran round the table that not one of those editors, men whose fingers were supposed to be on the pulse of the nation, had ever been west of Erie, Penn. They were intelligent men, brainy men; but they had been content to sit here in New York and attempt to interpret the thought of the entire nation.

Going to another plane, I dictated one day to my stenographer a letter that was

to go to a number of persons, I giving their addresses in Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis and a number of other places. In each and every instance the stenographer asked me the state in which the city was located. In answer to my question she said, yes, she'd heard of those towns, but she didn't know where they were. And yet she was intelligent enough to get out a perfect letter.

### The Novelist's "Crude Westerner"

One more incident and I'll leave the case with the jury. Not so long ago I read a novel, one of that kind classed loosely as a "society novel." It had a large sale. The plot concerned the heart affairs of a pampered New York heiress who found upon the death of her guardian that the only way she could inherit her share of the vast estate was by marrying some unknown Westerner who had been related to the guardian. This Western person came on to New York and, because he needed the money, and the girl did, too, they were wed. Great stress was laid upon the crude, uncouth ways of this boorish Westerner. He was pictured as being absolutely alien to this cultured and refined New York. No New York girl could possibly love such a rough specimen of the frontiersman. Personally, I pictured him to myself as a Wyoming sheepherder, not because I have anything against Wyoming, but because this sheepherder, no matter where he is found, usually is not a lovely person.

Imagine my surprise, then, when it developed in the later chapters of the book that the young man was from Pittsburgh, Penn.

Members of the jury, take the case.